American University, Ohio Hall of Government
(McKinley-Ohio Hall of Government)
Massachusetts and Nebraska Avenues
Washington
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-458

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY:
THE OHIO HALL OF GOVERNMENT (THE MCKINLEY-OHIO HALL OF GOVERNMENT)

Location: On The American University campus in northwest Washington, D.C. at Massachusetts and Nebraska Avenues.

Present owner and Occupant: The American University

Use: While it is no longer devoted to government, it used for academic purposes and houses many offices, some classrooms and many artist studios.

Significance: Designed by Henry Ives Cobb around the turn-of-the-century, this Classical styled structure was intended as the second of many Classical buildings for a comprehensive and formal campus with two (sometimes three) long intersecting malls. Unlike most 19th century collegiate edifices, it is not Gothic nor does it reflect any aspect of Romantic architecture, but is Classical in every detail. This relates it to the then resurging current of Neo-Classicism. In terms of Washington, D.C.'s architectural history, plans for this building and the University's campus predate the McMillan Plan, a scheme to restore and rejuvenate Pierre L'Enfant's design for the nation's capital. The erection and completion of The Ohio Hall of Government occurred after the initiation of the McMillan Commission in 1901. Like the first edifice designed for The American University, The Ohio Hall of Government was envisioned as one of the first structures for what was to be The National

University.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of Erection: The Ohio Hall of Government was conceived by Henry Ives Cobb around the turn-of-the-century. Its Classical forms and white marble were to congenially relate this structure with Henry Van Brunt's College of History, 1897-98, already standing at the University. In 1899, a movement was started in Ohio to raise money to build The Ohio Hall of Government at The American University in Washington, D.C. Cobb's association with the University had begun the previous year. Plans for this and other proposed structures were prepared by Cobb. Then President William McKinley, a trustee of the University, was very much interested in the enterprise, specifically in The Ohio Hall of Government, and promised to lay its cornerstone. McKinley, however, was assasinated in 1901 so Theodore Roosevelt laid the cornerstone on May 14, 1902. Soon after this ceremony, construction stopped for three years from 1902 to 1905 due to lack of funds. In 1905 construction resumed for two years in which the walls and roof were added at the cost of $155,000. Again, construction was halted and ceased in 1907. The Ohio Hall of Government was never completed per se, but has been in a state of finish adequate enough for use since at least 1917 when the U.S. Government moved into it.

(Early History Files, The American University Archives)

2. Architect: Henry Ives Cobb (1859-1931)

Henry Ives Cobb was born in Massachusetts where he later attended the Massachusetts Institue of Technology. After his education in The United States, he studied in Europe, thus becoming one of the few and first formally trained American architects. When he returned to The United States, he worked for Peabody & Stearns, an architectural firm in Boston. After the Chicago fire of 1871, many architects flocked to Chicago in order to receive commissions to rebuild that city. Cobb went to Chicago in 1881 and formed a partnership with Charles Sumner Frost which lasted until 1888. Apparently, Cobb was responsible for designing and Frost for construction. (Perhaps the most comprehensive source of information on Cobb is Julius Lewis' unpublished dissertation called "Henry Ives Cobb and the Chicago School" which was submitted to the faculty of the division of humanities, Department of Art, at The University of Chicago in June of 1954. Some of the preceding comes from that authoritative manuscript.)

Cobb was an eminent Chicago architect known for his many domestic buildings which were frequently rendered in the Romanesque and often bring to mind elements of the Richardsonian style so pervasive in Chicago during the 1880s. Cobb also received numerous commissions for public and institutional structures such as the Opera House and Office, the Owings Building and the Chicago Historical Society.

Of special importance is the fact that Cobb was one of the first architects of his day to employ metal as an internal skeletal support system. Like other architects of The Chicago School, he would utilize this kind of internal construction, but would rely on historic or pseudo-historic styles for buildings' exteriors. Cobb's use of historic references was frequently not archaeologically accurate, but fanciful, playful and eclectic. For the most part, however, he gravitated toward a Romantic vocabulary.

Between 1891 and 1900, Cobb was busy designing The University of Chicago which utilizes a Romantic style for the individual edifices and a formal plan for the entire campus. Cobb was also a participating architect at The World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. According to Julius Lewis, only Louis Sullivan and Cobb remained faithful to John Wellborn Root's original conception of the fair which was more Romantic. Lewis describes Cobb's witty and less archaeologically accurate vocabulary as "Fantasy architecturs."

Cobb's assocation with The American University enterprise began in 1898. That year Cobb moved to Washington, D.C. for personal reasons, but planned to continus work on The University of Chicago. According to correspondence between Cobb and The American University and a passage from the Chicago Weekly, dated March 1, 1900 (this passage was mentioned by Lewis in his unpublished manuscript on Cobb), Cobb had completed plans for most of the edifices proposed for The American University campus. Original renderings of and reproductions of buildings for the University reveal that all edifices were to be Classical. This was a departure in style for Cobb who generally employed a more

Romantic vocabular. Of all Cobb's many plans and designs for the University's 23 buildings, only The Ohio Hall of Government was ever erected. Its character is Classical in all details.

While style actively working at The American University, Cobb moved his main office to New York City in 1902. Cobb died in 1931 at the age of 71. His long career reveals his versatility and innovative character, as well as his ability to create comprehensively planned campuses and to work in both the Classical and Romantic styles.

3. Original and subsequent owners: By January 1889 John F. Hurst found a suitable property in northwest Washington, D.C. to house his Methodist University. At ths head of Massachusetts Avenue extended, some three miles from The White House and about four miles from The Capitol, this site was approximately 91 acres of rolling farmland known as the Davis Tract, a term derived from the previous owner's name. Its two subdivisions were called "Saints Philip and Jacob" and "Friendship." On January 25, 1890, an option of $1,000 was paid on the purchase price of $100,000. On February 28, 1890, Hurst paid the first installment of $20,000 and received the title transfer from the owner, Ashsah C. Davis and her representative, John W. Waggman. (Deed of Transfer may be found in The American University Archives, Early History File, Box 1, Folder 1)

At the time Hurst procured the land only a farm house stood on the site. Legend has it that George Washington once visited that farm house on his way back to Washington, D.C.

Based on the comprehensive campus design, The Ohio Hall of

Government was assigned a plot. Ever since its erection, it has been the property of The American University. (Early History File, The American University Archives)

4. Builder, contractor and suppliers: The Builders of The Ohio Hall of Government was the firm of Richardson & Burgess, Inc. which had been responsible for the Colorado Building, Washington, D.C. and the Winthrop Building, Boston, Massachusetts. Contractors included the Celadon Roofing Company of New York City and the Columbian Marble Company of Rutland, Vermont, as well as American Portland Cement and Thomas W. Smith (for lumber, doors, sash, blinds and mouldings), Washington, D.C. The Superintendent of Building and Grounds was John Brooks Hammond who served the University from 1896 to 1916 and had been responsible for The College of History.

The Ohio Hall of Government was the second building erected at The American University. Its Classical style was meant to harmoniously relate to Van Brunt's already standing College of History and to fit into Olmsted Associates' later master designs for The American University campus (See HABS No. _____, The College of History for more information on Olmsted Associates role at the University.) Cobb had no major objections to the two-quadrangle plan of Olmsted Associates. While he made some modifications like leaving an open area near Nebraska Avenue so an onlooker could more readily see the grand and monumental administration building (which was never erected) destined for the north end of the second mall, Cobb's comprehensive scheme for the

campus was based on Olmsted's. According to the following, the Chicago Weekly, Cobb waa actively working on plans for the University by 1898:

> Henry lvea Cobb has nearly completed plans for moat of the buildings of The American University, a work upon which will begin in the near future. The institution, located four milea from the Capitol at Waahington, will be connected directly with that building by the famous Massachusetts Avenue which will be extended for that purpose. As planned now, there will be 23 maasive buildings of marble and granite located on a well elevated campus of 93 acres.
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> (Chicago Weekly, March 1898)

Cobb's plana for the campus would have given great emphasis to visibility (for example the visibility of the proposed Administration Building) would have been favorably received by Hurst. Cobb alao added another row of buildings running parallel to The Court of Ceremony (the long mall running parallel to Nebraska Avenue and roughly perpendicular to Massachusetts Avenue. Such an addition would have demanded even more terracing and grading than the earlier plans required. Hurst's hilly farmland would have had to been almost completely flattened to accommodate this. Years before Cobb began working at the University, the landscape architectural firm of Olmsted Asaociates had been commissioned to design a acheme for the University's entire campus. While Olmsted Associates favored a Romantic diaposition of all

buildings with no rigid formality because of the irregularities of the site, the University founders pushed for greater formality and a Classical arrangement of all structures. By 1896, Olmsted Associates had given in to Hurst and the other officials and devised several absolutely Classical and formal plans all based on a two-quadrangle or mall scheme - the basic design of Cobb's comprehensive plan. Naturally, Hurst and the other supporters of The American University would have endorsed Cobb's vision for they envisioned a Classical city on a high terrace looming over Washington, D.C. and at the head at the prestigious Massachusetts Avenue. With eloquence and some pretension, they referred to their school as "The White City," a phrase more readily associated with the World Columbian Exposition of 1893.

Though one traffic circle at the north end of the campus was incorporated into Cobb's plan, the circle at the intersection of Massachusetts and Nebraska Avenues was completely eliminated, harkening back to one of Olmsted's many schemes of 1896. Instead of having the main entry at a circle, it was to be situated below the intersection of Massachusetts and Nebraska Avenues, designated by a triangular area of open space punctuated with some shrubbery. Symmetry was keynoted with respect to the arrangement of all buildings, roads and even flora. Two parallel access roads proceeded from this entrance wedge, moving parallel to The Court of Ceremony and connecting with the road system of the second mall. All elements were carefully woven together in a very calculated and well thought out plan. Nature played a secondary role in his design and was clearly

subordinate to man's architecture and planning. In effect, it was completely controlled, molded and manicured to suit the needs of this monumental architectural vision.

Though more ornate than Van Brunt's College of History, Cobb's buildings were to be rendered in a style that would enhance it in style and by using the same high quality marble. The two story Pennsylvania Hall of Administration with its looming central tower was to be the largest and most prominent structure. Its plan possessed a strong sense of symmetry which was re-enforced by two identical flanking pavilions, connected to the central structure by arcades. Cobb had used arcades in this same manner to join related buildings of The University of Chicago. Central pediments with elaborate sculptured ornamentation were to dominate the facades of all three of its pavilions. The most outstanding element of The Pennsylvania Hall of Administration was its domed clock tower above the central portico of the principle pavilion. The overall design and character of this edifice was modeled after Independence Hall in Philadelphia.

Buildings like the Illinois Hall of Language and the Epworth Building would be executed in a comparable mood, endowed with richness and dignity. Each would congenially relate to the other structures while retaining a strong individual character. No two buildings were to be identical. The Hall of Comparative Religion and The Ohio Hall of Government were to be placed at corner. The Ohio Hall of Government was to be situated at the intersection of The Court of Ceremony and the second mall. Today, it stands at the edge of The Court of Ceremony.

By the early years of the 20th century, various states were donating toward the erection of their state building. It was decided that The Pennsylvania Hall of Administration and The Ohio Hall of Government would be erected first because they had received most of the contributions. The cornerstone of The Ohio Hall of Government was to by laid by President William McKinley in 1901, but because of his untimely death, President Theodore Roosevelt did the honors in the Spring of 1902. At that time The Ohio Hall of Government was renamed The Ohio-McKinley Hall of Government as a tribute to the then dead president's great and ardent support of the University; and it was decided that this this edifice should be erected before all the others.

5. Original plan and construction: Before Cobb's death, most of his architectural studies from his studio were burned and destroyed. There seem to be no original drawings of the many buildings he planned for The American University. There are, however, reproductions of his ideas in the Courier and in another early University pamphlet (found at The Library of Congress. These depict individual structures such as his Ohio Hall of Government (which was also called The Ohio College of Government), The Pennsylvania Hall of Administration, the Illinois Hall of Language, the Epworth Building and The Hall of Comparative Religion. All were to be Classical in every respect. There are several original colored lithographs of Cobb's vision for the entire campus. These reveal where buildings were to be situated and give

a clear idea of what they would have looked like. Comparing these overall campus designs with those of Olmsted Associates, one realizes that Cobb's conception was based on those of Olmsted.

From these early plans, one sees that The Ohio Hall of Government was designed as an L-shaped structure with two wings of equal length. While today, the L-shaped region remains the principle part of the building, a large addition is present which was never planned by Cobb. It is situated at the edifice's rear and does not disturb one's view of the building's front. This addition does not destroy the structure's senee of symmetry, though it does not completely harmonize with the original structure.

The Ohio Hall of Government was officially handed over to the University in 1907. At that time, however, it was not finished. While its walls and roof were erected, external detailings were left incomplete. This becomes especially apparent when comparing Cobb's early plans (reproductions found in the Courier) to the existing etructure. The capitals of the long, two story columns supporting the domed porch are uncarved. Intended to be Corinthian, these capitals seem almost Cubistic in their current state. Cobb also hoped sculpture (specifically one of William McKinley) would adorn his Ohio Hall of Government. Due to the lack of funds, much had to be left incomplete. While the exterior is somewhat unfinished, with respect to Cobb's original schemes, the interior was never completed according to the architect's plans.

6. Alterations and additions: In 1917, the unfinished The Ohio-McKinley Hall of Government was turned over to The U.S. Government. The structure was then partially completed by the War Department and called Camp Leach. The interior was finished to accommodate chemical and other types of laboratories. In 1921, the building fell into the hands of the Agriculture Department. Again, some internal work would have been necessary. A few years later, a bureau dealing with chemistry and soils moved in. Government bureaus and agencies utilized the building until at least the early 1940s. Naturally, they finished the building's interior to suit their needs. In October of 1941, the edifice was leased to the Chesapeake & Potomac Telephone Company which occupied the structure until the mid 1950s. Again, additional alterations would have been necessary to accommodate the building's new use. The Ohio Hall of Government was not actually used by The American University until 1955. More changes would have then been needed for it to house many diverse departments and offices including administration, the School of Business Administration, a speech clinic, a language center, a student lounge and 25 classrooms. At least $200,000 was spent in renovating the structure's interior to accommodate the above mentioned. The Ohio Hall of Government opened during September 1955 for the University's use. In 1967, its ground floors were converted into offices and laboratories.

Examining Cobb's designs for this building reveals that he envisioned a semi-L-shaped plan with two equal length wings.

The extant structure includes this form, but also has a square shaped rear adddition not intended by Cobb. While this addition is made of marble, it does not harmonize the the original structure. In effect, the kind of elaborations found of the L-shape region are not found on the new section. There is, however, an obvious attempt to match color and motifs.

B. Historical Context:

The site on which The Ohio Hall of Government now stands along with the area of the University itself has its own history. Legend has it that George Washington once stopped at the old farm house on his way back to Washington, D.C. Interestingly enough, Hurst and the other founders of the University would continually look to the past for inspiration and always regarded George Washington as the spiritual founder of their enterprise. In their eyes, this particular site would have been that much more appropriate to house The National University because Washington himself had actually been there.

During the Civil War, Fort Gaines was established on what would later become The American University. Naturally, the site was perfect for such a fortification because of its high elevation. Fort Gaines became the city of Washington's first protective fortification and was designed to defend the nation's capital against a Southern advancement. It was inhabited by a garrison from Pennsylvania who threw up protective earthworks at the fortification's northern parts. Fort Gaines is described as one of the most important defense points during the Civil War.

In terms of American architectural history, both Van Brunt's College of History and Cobb's Ohio Hall of Government are important. Throughout the 19th century, the Romantic style dominated campus planning and architectural style. Van Brunt's Memorial Hall at Harvard and Cobb's University of Chicago exemplify this. Most college buildings

were rendered in some variant of the Gothic. Both The College of History and The Ohio Hall of Government break with this tradition. (For more information on Van Brunt's College of History see HABS No. _____, The College of History.) Unlike most campus buildings, these two are Classical in every detail and thus relate to the resurging mood of Classicism herald by The World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 - a fair in which both Van Brunt and Cobb played important roles.

Founded in Washington, D.C. during the early 1890s by the Methodist Bishop John Fletcher Hurst, The American University was directly stimulated by the exposition. Beyond the fact that Van Brunt and Cobb had worked there, Olmsted Associates had found the fair's site and designed its overall scheme. Cobb had been responsible for seven of the expesition's structures which was more than any other individual. Among them were the Indiana Building, the East India Building, the Fisheries Building and the Street in Cairo. Unlike Van Brunt and most of the architects working at the fair, Cobb did not employ the Classical style, but utilized what Julius Lewis refers to as "fantasy architecture," which was rather Romantic in its mood. The immediate effect of The World's Columbian Exposition, a comprehensive scheme of Classically disposed monumental structures arranged in a formal manner around lagoons and waterways, upon the course of architectural history in The United States is well known and acknowledged. (T.M. Karlowicz' dissertation, The Architecture of the World's Columbian Exposition, 1969, is probably the best and most comprehensive study of the fair

and its architecture.) The exposition's formal grouping of buildings and use of the Classical style set a precedent. The concept of "The White City" was an instrumental force in the architectural development of The American University, its College of History and The Ohio Hall of Government.

While the fair's monumentality and Classical style greatly influenced The American University's early plans, early American history also stimulated the University's birth and development. George Washington's dream of a great national university in the nation's capital and Pierre L'Enfant's Classical design for Washington, D.C., as well as the works of Thomas Jefferson inspired Hurst who say The American University as the fulfillment of Washington's vision. To Hurst, The American University was Washington's "National University." The following excerpt from the University's Courier exemplifies this:

> The thought of a National University at Washington, D.C. is older than the Republic. In October 1775, Major William Bodgett went to the headquarters of General Washington to complain of the ruinous state of the college (Harvard) from the conduct of the militia quartered in Cambridge, Massachusetts. General Green, being present, said to the company in consultation: "To make amends for these injuries after the war he hoped we would erect a National University at Washington." General Washington made reply with tnat inimitably expressive and truly interesting look

for which he was sometimes so remarkable: "Young man, you are a prophet, inspired." General Washington gave the credit of the thought of building a university at the National Capital to Colonial Byrd, of Virginia, who is believed to be the first man who suggested the Federal city as the place for a great university for America. During subsequent years of Washington's life he always put the idea of a great university at the Capital next to the federation of the States. His thought was that a Federal city and a National University would be two great influences for the purpose of strengthening the bond existing between the various State governments and the National. Through his influence a committee was sent to Europe to study and devise plans for a University. The detailed drawings as agreed upon are in the Congressional Library, and are worthy of study. We hope in some future number of the Courier to present them to our readers.

During Mr. Washington's presidency, in his communications to Congress he frequently made reference to his favorite idea. In his will he provided for it beneficently. He died at the age of 67, December 14, 1799, "leaving in his stocks equal to $25,000 for his favorite National University and inviting subsribing followers and directing the interest to be invested at compound interest until the fund that such subscriptions has invited in his will may sufficient for the entire

object. (Courier, Volume 1, Number 1, September 1892, page 10, The American University Archives)

In 1895, Hurst purchased and copyrighted a facsimile of George Washington's letter on The National University. Hurst's hope to establish Washington's National University was responsible for the execution of comprehensive campus designs rendered in the Classical, as well as the eventual erection of The Ohio Hall of Government.

Associating Classical architecture with the ancient republics of antiquity, George Washington and his architect Pierre L'Enfant favored the Classical style for the nation's capital. Thomas Jefferson, who also equated a Classical vocabularywith the republics of ancient Greece and Rome, chose the Classical style for his University of Virginia. With the same kind of logic, Hurst preferred the Classical for his National University and, therefore, The College of History and subsequently The Ohio Hall of Government. Hurst was inspired by L'Enfant's Classical Baroque design for Washington, D.C. in which all principle boulevards radiate out from the heart of the city. Massachusetts Avenue, considered one of the most important, prestigious and beautiful thoroughfares in Washington, D.C., was one of L'Enfant's major boulevards. Naturally, Hurst and the other founders of the University hoped that Massachusetts Avenue would eventually reach their hilly spot from downtown Washington, D.C, and, thus connect "The National University" with the heart of the nation's capital. Eventually legislation was secured to extend Massachusetts Avenue specifically

to the University Grounds. The following is a turn-of-the-century bill introduced to Congress:

> A Bill: for extension and improvement of Massachusetts Avenue and Boundary Avenues, Northwest,
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> Whereas the artistic development of the Capital City requires that the magnificient system of avenue radiating from the city's center be finished; and whereas, the extension of Washington's widest and finest residential avenue, Massachusetts Avenue, and of Boundary Avenue, contemplated by the construction of the now completed Massachusetts Avenue Bridge, will subserve several great public purposes, among which are the following:
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> The providing of a much needed thoroughfare of general travel; The development of the most attractive portion of the District of Columbia; The opening of the avenue approaches to the Naval Observatory, the Episcopal Cathedral Site and Schools, and The American University Campuses;
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> (Early History File, The American University Archives)

While this bill may not have secured all the desired ends of the University officials, a imilar bill (H.R. 19039) was introduced by Representative Smith of Michigan in 1910 and was approved by both Houses and the President that years.

The following is the bill as worded in the Congressional Record on February 17, 1910:

> Be it enacted, etc., That, under and in accordance with the provisions of subchapter 1 of chapter 15 of the Code of Law for the District of Columbia, the Commissioners of the District of Columbia be, and they are hereby, authorized and directed to institute in the supreme court of the District of Columbia a proceeding in rem to condemn the land that may be necessary for the extension and widening of Massachusetts avenue, N.W. from Wisconsin avenue to the District line, with a width of 160 feet: Provided, however, That the entire amount found to be due and awarded by the jury in said proceeding as damages for and in respect of the land to be condemned for said extension plus the costs and expenses of the proceeding hereunder shall be assessed by the jury as benefits.
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> Sec. 2. That the Commissioners of the District of Columbia are hereby authorized and directed to abandon that portion of ground east of Hamilton Circle lying between the south line of Massachusetts avenue NW., as heretofore dedicated, and the south line of the said avenue as established by the plan of the permanent system of highways of the District of Columbia,

and the said ground shall revert to the owners of the adjacent lots Noe. 1 to 8, inclusive, in square No. 1815, in accordance with their respective frontages.

Sec. 3. That there is hereby appropriated out of the revenues of the Dietrict of Columbia an amount eufficient to pay the neceseary costs and expenses of the condemnation proceedinge herein provided for and for the payment of the amounte awarded by the jury as damages, to be repaid to the District of Columbia from the assessments for benefits and covered into the Treasury to the credit of the revenuee of the District of Columbia. (Congressional Record, House, February 17, 1910, pages 2036-37)

While securing passage of a bill authorizing a paved and modern road to extend to the Univereity took along time to achieved, it must be remembered that Waehington, D.C. was a small town at the turn-of-the-century. At that time, Cleveland Park was being developed as a suburban, practically rural, retreat for city dwellers. The National Cathedral, like The American University, had only been begun. In effect, the campus of The American University was located far from Washington, D.C. proper in a rural environment. During the first decade of the 20th century much was happening in the way of road conetruction in Washington, D.C. The extension of Maesachueetts Avenue to Wisconsin and then to The American Univereity fit neatly into this fervor of activity. Several Senators and

Representatives served as trustees of The American University and did all they could to further the passage of bills authorizing Massachusetts Avenue's extsnsion to the campus. Though petitioning for the road's extension had begun as early as 1891 and passage of a bill requiring its extsnsion to the University had been passed in 1910, the avenue as a finished and paved thoroughfare may not have reached the oampus until 1912. By 1908, however, Massachusetts Avenue did reach the University, but probably was not in an as finishsd form. It is fair to assume that this very important event in the life of ths University would have been enacted many years earlier had the school's most powerful supporters such as Prssident William McKinley, Senator James McMillan and John F. Hurst himself had lived longer.

Hurst' choice of acreage at ths head of Massachusetts Avenue extended may initially appear to be somewhat impractical, but it did fit neatly into the comprehensive plan of Washington, D.C. Its eventual location on a traffic circle further demonstrates this. In L'Enfant's scheme, significant intsrsections and places were situated on rond point or circles. A traffic oircle would articulate the importance of ths school and would have been the logical conclusion to a grand boulevard that culminated in ths "National University." Hurst's Protestant University would thus be physically and psychologioally part of L'Enfant's grand scheme. Today, The American University is on Ward Circle.

The eventual completion of Massachusetts Avenue to the University complied with the goals of the McMillan Commission

which stressed the importance of restoring and continuing L'Enfant's plan. Massachusetts Avenue's extension (or completion) was part of the McMillan scheme. Interestingly, Senator James McMillan who was the prime initiator of the commission had been formally associated with The American University in 1891 and was an ardent supporter of the enterprise. McMillan would have been well aware of the school's predilection for L'Enfant's plan and the nation's capital's roots in Classicism. The University's fidelity to early American dreams predates that of the McMillan Commission by a decade.

The University, envisioned as the fulfillment of George Washington's dream of a National University located in the federal city, was carefully planned in all ways (except perhaps financially). For this reason, deliberation was taken not only in the selsction of architects, but in incorporators. Originally 13 prominent Americans were asked to serve as incorporators; the number 13 being chosen for its symbolic association with the first 13 states. In effect, Hurst and the other founders saw themselves as continuing and advancing what had been so dear to those who established the American nation itself: the creation of The National University. This aspiration would play a great role in the selection of an appropriate architeotural style for The College of History and later all the building's proposed and designed by Cobb. Beyond the original 13, names were added to ths list of incorporators. Among these were James McMillan and Robert Pattison, Governor of Pennsylvania, which might explain why

so much money had been contributed towards the erection of The Pennsylvania Hall of Administration. This might also help to explain why a building named after Pennylvania was to be the most monumental and important structure on campus. Obviously, Pattison would have been doing all he could to advance Hurst's project and secure the creation of The Pennsylvania Hall of Administration.

Admired by both Democrats and Republicans, James McMillan entered Michigan politics in the 1880s and later served as a Republican Senator from 1889 until his death in 1902, the year Roosevelt laid the cornerstone of The Ohio Hall of Government. It was on May 28, 1891 that his name appears on The American University Certificate of Incorporation from The District of Columbia. (Early History Files, The American University Archives) This means he became associated with the University only two years after his election to The United States Senate and must have well knew of the high minded goals and aspirations of Hurst since the University's inception - during those crucial years of its beginnings. However, McMillan later declined the formal position of incorporator, giving the following reason in his letter of September 23, 1891 to the University:

> I have given the matter consideration and have decided that as a member of the Senate Committee on the District of Columbia it will not be best for me to appear as one of the incorporators of the American University.

McMillan obviously felt an official association with one of the oity's universities might be a conflict of interests with his duties on the Senate Committee on the District of Columbia. This does not mean he lost interest in Hurst's endeavor. In fact, the following excerpt from another letter written by McMillan to the University indicates the opposite:

> ....and (I) am pleased to know that the Bishop and others interested in the American University are gratified at what little I was able to do toward the extension of Massachusetts Avenue. (Early History Files, The American University Archives; letter dated 1893)

Though McMillan probably did not introduoe bills concerning Massachusetts Avenue's extension to The American University, he apparently lobbied vehemently for the cause. Interestingly, this letter reveals McMillan's interest in extending one of L'Enfant's major thoroughfares even before his creation of the McMillan Commission, which became the Park and Planning Commission.

Before Massachusetts Avenue could reach The American University, a bridge had to be built over Rock Creek and the Parkway. Both the Senate and House eventually passed bills authorizing this (Senate Bill S. 4459 and Congressional Bill H.R. 12256 dealt specifically with this matter). This transpired on December 2, 1890. One of the individuals who introduced and sponsored the bill was Mr. Faulkner, who was also involved with The American University enterprise. By 1898, a bridge crossed the creek and parkway, extending

Massachusetts Avenue that much closer to Hurst's "National University."

Another important official supporting the University was Senator L.E. McComas of Maryland who served as a trustee of The American University from 1892 until his death in 1907. While McComas was a staunch advocate of the project, he had some reservations about a National University's dependence upon the Federal Government and wrote the following to the University:

> I look with distrust upon a National University coddled by Congress. The Columbian University, the Catholic University and the Episcopal Schools all succeed at the National Capital. Surely the American University will....You must always count on me as the constant friend and advocate of the great university you have founded on such a broad basis. Your foundation will be sufficiently non-sectarian to satisfy the liberalism of coming centuries.
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> (Early History Files, The American University Archives)

Despite his obvious reservations, McComas continued to support the University and introduced legislation that would help it.

Perhaps the most important of all the University's advocates and certainly the most well known was President William McKinley who became a trustee in 1899. For years, the University officials hoped their school would achieve a

national character for it was to be The National University. Again following the precedent of The World's Columbian Exposition, the University officials decided to erect buildings that honored particular states of the nation. In effect, each state would contribute funds toward the construction of its edifice. This was also a means to insure nation-wide support, as well as emphasizing the school's national purpose. McKinley's whole-hearted support of The American University would have enhanced its national character and purpose. It may also help to account for the fact that the state of Ohio was second only to that of Pennsylvania in contributing funds to the University. Around the turn-of-the-century, it was decided that The Ohio Hall of Government and The Pennsylvania Hall of Administration would be erected first because their respective states had given the most toward this ends. Looking at Cobb's designs for both structures, McKinley, a Methodist from Ohio, noted with some reservation, "Pennsylvania's building is by far more pleasing than Ohio's."

The cornerstone of the Ohio Hall of Government was to be laid by McKinley in December of 1901. This was, of course, proven to be an impossibility because the President was assasinated in September of that year. President Theodore Roosevelt, also a trustee of the University, laid the stone in the Spring of 1902. As a tribute to the martyred president, the University changed the name of The Ohio Hall of Government to The McKinley-Ohio Hall of Government. Documentation from The American University Archives states

that the University was first in the field to lay plans to perpetuate the memory of President McKinley. They saw not only The McKinley-Ohio Hall of Government but their entire University as a tribute to McKinley, a man who at one time indicated a willingness to accept the deanship of The Ohio Hall of Government after his retirement from public life and politics. Apparently William McKinley had also contributed funds toward the erection of the Ohio building. The University itself made more and more pleas to all Americans for additional support of their project, always emphasizing the national character and purpose of their school and equating the role of McKinley at The American University with that of Thomas Jefferson at The University of Virginia. In effect, they saw their school as a contemporary UVA.

It must be remembered that this was the age of The Great White Fleet. The ideas surfacing at The American University and their quest to establish The National University reflected the resurging preoccupation with nationalism and revived Protestantism. The University officials acknowledged the existence of other fine schools in Washington, D.C., but always qualified their statements by reiterating that their school was special for it would be the consummation of George Washington's vision. They wrote:

> Our Roman Catholic friends, have been doing their part splendidly and have been building largely and well. The Columbian University and later The George Washington University have been doing a needed and helpful work.

> But the great University contemplated by George Washington is something more and greater than these. It should be a university exclusively for post graduate work.
> (The University Courier, The American University Archives)

The fact that so many prominent political persons were associated with the enterprise is also significant. Hurst's dream to establish George Washington's great university, despite the fact that Hurst's school would be affiliated with a particular religious denomination, was accepted and supported by many. Their University was intended to (and does) fit neatly into the physical - and, therefore, psychological - plan of the city with The American University standing at the head of Massachusetts Avenue extended on Ward Circle. If one follows this dignified thoroughfare toward the city proper, one would be led to the heart of the nation's capital and Union Station. Built in 1907, Union Station was meant to be the gateway to the city of Washington. Considering its location on Massachusetts Avenue, it may also be viewed as the gateway to the "National University." One wonders if this could have been a deliberate gesture on the part of the McMillan Commission because it seems too well planned to be otherwise.

One glance at the present campus of The American University reveals that the Classical two-mall scheme never materialized. Due to the lack of money, Cobb's monumental visions were never fully realized. Of the early buildings, only The

College of History and The Ohio Hall of Government were ever erected. The Ohio Hall of Government, however, was never completed according to the architect's original plans. This is especially apparent when examining the capitals of the exterior columns which are still rough and uncarved. Comparing Cobb's original drawings of this building to the existing structure also reveals its lack of finish. None of the proposed statuary, including one of President McKinley, were ever executed. The edifice's interior does not reflect any of the architect's initial ideas and is incongruous with the mood and character of the building's exterior. Like The College of History, The Ohio Hall of Government is but a vague reflection of a monumental Classical scheme for an entire university complex. Hsd Hurst's vision been realized The American University would have triumphantly dominated the high ground three miles from the heart of Washington, looming above the nation's capital as a "White City" dressed in marble and perhaps the first Classically conceived campus - in design and style - since Jefferson's University of Virginia. With great pride in these two edifices, the University wrote in its Courier the following:

> The White City set upon a hill cannot be hid. (Courier, March 1909)
>
> ....argent crown of a metropolis turning to silvery marble. Washington has been growing whiter for 20 years - Library of Congress, Naval Observatory, Riggs National Bank,

American Security and Trust Company, the Evening Star, DAR, Union Station, Masonic Temple.
(Courier, March 1909)

....shall this outward whitening, a spreading splendor in our Capital City, prove to be, in the years to follow, only the material sign of moral leprosy, or shall it become the effective symbol of a growing purity in private life and in public affairs?
(Courier, March 1909)

Of great significance is the assoication of architecture and philosophy so well documented in the above quotes. To the University officials, architecture could be an expressive medium that bespeaks of morality, patriotism, nationalism, Protestantism and Democracy.

In 1907, The Ohio Hall of Government had its external walls and a roof, but it was not in a truly finished state. Despite this, it was handed over to the U.S. Government in 1917. The structure was then partially completed by the War Department and used by it to study chemical warfare. In 1919, a fixed nitrogen research laboratory was installed. Just two years later, part of the Department of Agriculture moved in. It has been said that a "nucleus of some of the most brilliant chemical minds in the nation" worked there during that period. By the early 1940s, the various federal agencies moved out of The Ohio Hall of Government, but the University then leased space in the building to the

Chesapeake & Potomac Telephone Company which utilzed the facilities until 1955.

Prepared by: Karin M.E. Alexis, Art and Architectural Historian
Teacher, Northern Virginia Community College and
Southeastern University;
Doctoral Student, The University of Virginia;
1981

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architsctural character: The Ohio Hall of Government is a two story (with basement and attic floors), cream white marble edifice rsndered in the Classical style and originally concsived as a L-shaped structure with two squal lsngth wings. A dome is situated at the intersection of the two wings above a circular portico and marks the edifice's principle entrance. Like the University's other early building, The College of History, this structure was designed respecting symmetry and geometry.

2. Condition of the fabric: The exterior is in good condition. The interior was never completed according to Cobb's designs. lt is in a state of repair, but does not harmonize with the building's sxterior.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The Ohio Hall of Government is located on The American University at the end of the campus' only formal quadrangls, The Court of Ceremony. Its main sntranoe was meant to face the intersection of The Court of Ceremony and what would have bsen the sscond mall. This means that one of its wings runs parallel to the lateral extsnsions of The Court of Ceremony, The College of History and Nebraska Avenus (East-West) while its other wing is perpendicular to The Court of Ceremony (North-South).

The building hae 50,230 Gross Square feet, 27,703 Net Square feet, three classroom, five laboratories and 52 officee. It is 38 feet tall. Its wings are approximately 140 feet long (frontal eections) with 59 foot backe and 25 foot third sidee. The addition has two exterior walle of 58 feet in length.

2. Foundations: Ite foundations are comprieed of one part Portland cement, three parts clean, sharp torpedo sand and four parte clean crushed strong stone. The retaining walle are concrete up to the grade line. (Most likely some granite was used.)

3. Walls: Walls were built to last and rival the beauty of those of The College of History. Retaining walls are concrete up to the grade line. Wall plaetering ie comprieed of a good, heavy coat of Portland cement mortar with one part eand and one part cement. Concrete footing and hard burned arch brick was used for the walls above. Rubble masonry wae used throughout. (Most likely granite was also used.) High quality marble was ueed for the external walle of the building. Cobb was insistent that the marble ueed for his Ohio Hall of Government be as attractive as that found on The College of History.

4. Structural eystem: (steel,) iron, brick and reinforced concrete

5. Openinge:

   a. Doorways and doors: Facing the intereection of The Court of Ceremony and the eecond mall (diagonal to The Court of Ceremony), the principle entrance is eituated in the circular portico beneath the copper dome. It is located where the building'e two wings meet and eervee to divide the etructure into two equal halvee.

To reach the main double doors which are now modern and and made of metal framed glass, one must proceed up a host of steps passed four true columns and two attached pillars, all arranged in a semi-circular arrangement at the building's corner; all of which are monumental in size (being four feet in diameter and weighing 5 tons according to the Courier) and form, extending the full two storeys of the edifice to support a beautiful entablature. The capitals, however, which are not Corinthian as Cobb envisioned, but uncarved, seem unfinished. This entry is quite Neo-Classical, using a Classical vocabulary, emphasizing symmetry and absolute balance and possessing a character detached from that of its landscape environment. This set of double doors and its rather elaborate entry is the only formal entrance. There are, however, three entrances in the building's rear; all of which are found in the addition and, therefore, were not designed or intended by Cobb.

b. Windows: The entrance portico is in possession of rectangular, full size windows; all of which are arranged in precise symmetry and situated above the double doors. A series of arches within which are window apertures is found on both wings. Each wing has nine full size rectangular windows and one half width rectangular windows (located nearest the portico) on its first and second floors (which means that the front side of each wing has two rows of ten windows plus basement windows). Framed by each arch are two windows; one from the first floor and the other from the second. This treatment is repeated throughout

the original L-shape region of the structure, serving to visually unite the two floors and, subsequently, the building. At the end of both wings, the last two sets of windows are given special emphasis because this area projects (toward The Court of Ceremony if on the east-west wing or toward the second mall if on the north-south wing). The ends of the wings thus serve as parenthesis or frames, appropriately terminating the structure's edges. They also visually relate to the projections of the central portico and work to unite the wings' ends with the entry. Van Brunt used a very similar approach to achieve much the same thing in his College of History, 1898, the first structure erected for The American University. In both buildings, the viewer can more readily sense the whole because of this compositional device. These projecting ends visually bring the onlooker back to the central portico. The sides of the wings also have arches within which are window apertures. Each side has two rows of five windows. While the addition blocks one's view of part of the wings' third side (that which runs parallel to the frontal sides facing the respective malls), one can still see approximately 25 feet of this area. The third side of both wings has two rows of two windows; all of which are treated in the same way all the wings' windows are.

Compared to the addition, the wings seem complete (though they are not). The two exterior walls of the addition do not continue the series of arches with windows. Each does have, however, three second floor windows within three

respective arches, There are also a few smaller, unrelated windows and several doors.

6. Roof: The east-west and north-south wings intersect at right angles directly below a fairly large white polychromed copper dome which crowns The Ohio Hall of Government.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: Had the addition not been erected, The Ohio Hall of Government would have had a rather straight forward, rational plan typical of Classical edifices. It still possesses a basic logic ruled by symmetry. One can easily see the structure's original L-shaped design when entering the building. Entering the edifice from the principle entry, one is greeted first by a small circular entry (which is directly under the portico) and then a large three-storey rotunda (a grand hall under the dome itself). The grand hall houses a metal staircase.

Radiating from the monumental rotunda are two principle corridors (one runs east-west and the other north-south) flanked by various rooms and offices. At the ends of both corridors are large classrooms. Immediately before these last rooms are doors leading to the addition. There is a similar treatment on the second floor.

The Ohio Hall of Government has 50,230 Gross Square feet, 27,703 Net Square feet, two principle floors, an attic and basement. The attic is somewhat finished and is described as a floor. Most of the rooms in this building

are relatively small or partitioned to accommodate offices. In fact, while there ars three classrooms with a capacity of 155 and five laboratoriss with a capacity of 94, there are 52 administrative offices with a capacity of 78.

2. Staircases: The main staircase is found in the rotunda. It dominates that room's space. While it is made of modern metals and not finished in a Classical style, one can readily imagine the kind of grand, iron wrought, turn-of-the-century staircase Cobb envisioned. There are also staircases locatsd in the addition where the adddition's main halls meet the building's principle corridors. These two staircases are also of a relatively modern vintage.
3. Floorings: Ths U.S. Government moved into the building in 1917. At that time, ths struoture (especially its interior) was unfinished. Concerned with fire-proofing (probably because of the flamability of the chemicals it was researching), the government placed reinforced concrete on four stor ys (basemsnt, first, second and attic) of this marble building. In 1955, the University spent approximately $200,000 on altering and renovating The Ohio Hall of Government so it would accommodate its own needs. such as housing administrative offices, the School of Businss Administration, a speech clinic, a languags lab center, a student lounge and classrooms. Alterations would have been necessary when the University converted ground floor areas into offices and laboratories in 1967.

This structure's interior is still rather unfinished in appearance, having none of the refinements Cobb wold have envisioned. Instead of marble and wood

or some material that would complement the structure's marble exterior, ordinary modern tiles have been installed.

4. Walls and ceilings: The ceiling in the rotunda and elsewhere is metalic and of a modern vintage. Walls are usually cinderblock or brick and are painted mustard yellow in the entry. Other rooms have a more modern appearance with plastering.
5. Doorways and doors: modern vintage, not of a style envisioned by the architect.
6. Hardware: Most of the interior hardware is of a relatively recent vintage (and not dating from the first decade of the 20th century), having been installed during and after 1917.

Author: Karin M.E. Alexis, Art and Architectural Historian;
Teacher, Northern Virginia Community College and
Southeastern University;
Doctoral Student, The University of Virginia;
1981

C. Sources of Information: The preceding is based on research executed in Washington, D.C. (The American University Archives, The Library of Congress, The National Archives), Brookline, Massachusetts (Olmsted's Studio) and Chicago, Illinois (The Burnham Library, The Newberry Library and The University of Chicago).

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Prepared by: Karin M.E. Alexis, Art and Architectural Historian;
Teacher, Northern Virginia Community College and Southeastern University;
Doctoral Student, The University of Virginia;
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